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March 27, 2018

Senator Mike McGuire
Chair, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 408
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 946 (Lara) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator McGuire:

The California Labor Federation supports SB 946 (Lara), which allows local governments to regulate vendors by creating a permitting process and prohibits the criminalization of sidewalk vending.

Across the state, tens of thousands of people work as sidewalk vendors, selling food and merchandise on the public sidewalk or in public parks. Studies show that sidewalk vendors are overwhelmingly women and seniors, and vending provides a means to put food on the table, pay rent, buy school supplies, and otherwise survive in the face of extreme poverty.

Despite the importance to individual families and the immense community benefits, many local jurisdictions impose an outright prohibition on all vending, while others impose onerous restrictions that severely limit vending and relegate vendors to the underground economy. Permits are often impossible to obtain and vending without a permit is prosecuted as a crime.

The criminalization of vending has significant and devastating consequences, especially in low income and immigrant communities. Vendors charged with a misdemeanor can face penalties of up to six months in jail and \$1,000 in fines. A conviction may also increase an undocumented resident's priority for removal under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Priority Enforcement Program. A misdemeanor conviction can also potentially jeopardize a vendor's eligibility for certain immigration benefits for which they must demonstrate "good moral character."

SB 946 will protect vulnerable sidewalk vendors and create a new opportunity for entrepreneurship and economic mobility while still preserving local control. This bill will allow a local authority to adopt a sidewalk licensing program in order to adequately enforce any sidewalk vending violations. Further, any violation of local sidewalk vending rules will be subject to an administrative penalty program. Finally, SB 946 will establish minimum safety standards for local authorities when initiating a sidewalk vending licensing program.

We urge you to vote "YES" on SB 946 (Lara) when it comes before you in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Young
Legislative Advocate

MY: sm
OPEIU 29 AFL CIO

Cc: Committee Members
Senator Ricardo Lara